Shri Syed Sahid Ali was holding the charge temporarily, he was not competent to exercise power under section 54 of the Wakf Act.

Payment of Monthly Scholarship to SC/ST Students

*597. SHRI R. MARGABANDU : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether her Ministry has received any complaint during the last finacial year regarding non-payment of monthly scholarship to the SC and ST students in time; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) During the last financial year, this Ministry received represention from individuals and organisations regarding non-payment/delay in payment of scholarship under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Post Matric Scholarship to students belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Central assistance under the Scheme is only given to the States and UTs for disbursal of admissible scholarship to the beneficiaries. It is the responsibility of the States and UTs to ensure that all the eligible beneficiaries are released payments in time and without delay. Complaints received by the Ministry were referred to the concerned States/UTs for appropriate action.

Import of Consumer Goods

*598. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that some of the consumer products like eggs, apple, atta, etc. are being imported in huge quantity these days;

(b) if so, what are the reasons for increase in import of consumer products;

(c) if not, what is the real picture of Indian consumer market today;

(d) whether it is also a fact that Indian domestic producers of consumer goods have started facing severe constraints due to cheap import of consumer products; and

(e) if so, how Government propose to protect the interest of domestic producers?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) to (e) India has been following a continuous policy of removal of restrictions on imports since 1991. Tariff line-wises import policy was first announced on 31 -3-1996. As on that date, import of 6161 tariff lines (at 10 digit level) out of the total number of 10202 tariff lines (at 10 digit level) was free. Important restrictions on 488 tariff lines (at 10 digit level) were removed during the period 1-4-96 to 31-3-97, further 391 tariff lines (at 8 digit level) were freed during the period 1-4-97 to 13-4-98 and 894 tariff lines (at 8 digit level) were freed on 1-4-99. Quantitative restrictions on 714 items were removed on 31-03-2000. Some of the items, import of which has been allowed freely, include consumer products.

When import of any particular item is free, the actual quantity imported depends on the domestic demand-supply situation. However, all imports in the country are subject to applicable rates of customs duties and also subject to domestic laws, rules, orders, regulations, technical specifications and environmental safety norms as applicable for domestically produced goods. This should provide adequate protection to the domestic industry.

As per the provisionsl import data available with Government, import of eggs, apples and wheat/meslin flour was worth Rs. 1.01 Crores, Rs. 4.14 Crores and Rs. 2.04 Crores respectively for the period April to October, '99. However, the imports are being closely monitored and government would strive to ensure through appropriate use of tariff mechanism that imports do not cause any serious determent or injury to the domestic industry. Import duty on apple was revised upwards from 38.5% to 50% on 5-4-2000.

Development of Industrial Growth Centres in Gujarat

*599. DR. A.K. PATEL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) the amount released so far to the State Government of Gujarat for the development of industrial growth centres;

(b) the amount utilised so far by the State Government Centre-wise; and

(c) the target fixed and achievement made, so far in respect of these growth centres, Centre-wise?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) An amount of Rs. 12 crore as detailed below has so far been released as Central assistance to the Government of Gujarat